

My name is Kim Anderson from Battle Creek. I have been a taxpayer and property owner in Michigan since the 70s. I am an essential worker and parent of a registrant who is also an essential worker. If you or any of your family members has been hospitalized recently, you probably were in a hospital bed containing mechanical parts made by my son. If you or any of your family members has taken a store-brand over-the-counter medication, you probably used a medication made by the company I work for.

So the fact that you are conducting a hearing under these circumstances troubles me on a number of levels, especially when it involves discussion of a bill that is such a poor attempt at alleviating the deficiencies of the current SORA.

The timing is suspicious to me because the current SORA has been unconstitutional for several years even though it continued to be enforced until just recently, so I wonder what the sudden urgency is.

Instead of continuing to try to fix SORA by tweaking the wording, I suggest that the legislature needs to go back to square 1 and re-evaluate the intent of the registry.

Section 28.721a states:

The legislature has determined that a person who has been convicted of committing an offense covered by this act poses a potential serious menace and danger to the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the people, and particularly the children, of this state.

I wonder how the legislature continues to make this determination when it is so convincingly and completely refuted by data. I wonder if the true intent is instead to score political points by capitalizing on widespread public misconceptions about sex crimes, recidivism and registry effectiveness.

Section 28.721a goes on to say:

The registration requirements of this act are intended to provide law enforcement and the people of this state with an appropriate, comprehensive, and effective means to monitor those persons who pose such a potential danger.

The irony is that the registry and its punitive aspects only serve to undermine those things that have been proven to reduce recidivism; namely stable housing, stable employment, and a support system for registrants. In other words, the registry not only doesn't enhance public safety but actually serves to erode public safety.

A particularly egregious example is school safety zones which only serve to limit the housing and employment opportunities for registrants, and the problem of vagueness with the current law is not alleviated by the addition of property lines to the definition. If this attempt to fix the issue of vagueness wasn't so tragic and ineffective, it would be comical.

Given that the data shows that SORA isn't fulfilling the legislative intent, we are left with SORA functioning primarily as a means of punishment. My son can't take his son to the playground by our house nor can he attend any of his son's school functions or meaningfully participate in his education. My wife and I can't be on the neighborhood watch because our house is one of the ones being watched thanks to the registry. Most importantly, my grandson who is an innocent party, must suffer the shame, bullying, and assaults because of the notoriety that the registry causes.

I respectfully request that the legislature not only abandon HB 5679, but that you also comprehensively re-evaluate the intent of the registry in light of huge body of evidence that wasn't available when the law originated but is now.

Thank you for your time and attention.